

17.  
A PROLOGUE Spoken at MITHRIDATES King of  
PONTUS, the First Play Acted at the THEATRE  
ROYAL this Year, 1681.

13. Feb. 1682

AFTER a four Months Fast we hope at length  
Your queasie Stomachs have recover'd strength  
That You can taste a Play (your old coarse Messe)  
As honest and as plain as an Addresse.  
And therefore Welcome from your several Parts,  
You that have gain'd kind Country Wench's Hearts: *stolen.*  
Have watch'd returning Milk-maids in the Dark,  
And sinn'd against the Pales of every Park.  
Welcom fair Ladies of unblemish'd Faith,  
That left Town Bagnio's for the fruitful Bath;  
For when the Season's Hot, and Lover's there,  
The Waters never fail to get an Heir. *make.*  
Welcom kind Men that did your Wives attend,  
And Welcom He that was the Husbands Friend,  
Who holding Chat did silently Encroach,  
With Treacherous Hand to grabble in the Coach.  
Hail you New-Market Brothers of the Switch,  
That leap left Strumpets, full of Pox and Itch, } *use cast.*  
A leap more dangerous than the Devil's Ditch.  
Last Welcom you who never did appear;  
Gave out i'th' Country, but lay fluxing here. *the*  
Now Crawl abroad with Stick, lean-chapt and thin,  
And Fair as Lady that hath new lain in;  
This Winter let us reckon you our own,  
For all Wise Men will let the State alone:  
The Plot's remov'd, a Witness of Renown } *Dr oakr.*  
Has lodg'd it safe, at t'other End o'th' Town,  
And that it ne're may fail, some pious Whore  
Has cast her Mite, and fairly at his Dore }  
Laid two small squalling Evidences more;  
Which well instructed, if we take their words,  
In time may grow to hang two Popish Lords; } *comd.*  
Heav'n Grant the Babes may Live, for Faith there's need,  
Swearers fall off so fast, if none succeed }  
The Land's in danger quite to loose the breed.  
Unless you break an Aët, which were a Sin,  
And for recruit let Irish Cattle in.  
Well; after all 'twere better to Compound,  
Then let the foolish Frolick still go round,  
Both sides have lost and by my Computation  
None but Jack Ketch has gained in the Nation. *gained in all the*  
*John Dryden.*



EPILOGUE. by Mr Dryden.

*with the old* POX on this Play-house, 'tis an old tir'd Jade,  
I will do no longer, we must force a Trade ;

*our* What if we all turn Witness of the Plot ?  
That's overstockt, there's nothing to be got.  
Shall we take Orders ? That will Parts require,  
And Colledges give no Degrees for Hire,  
Would *Salamancha* was a little nigher.

Will nothing do ? Oh now 'tis found I hope ;  
Have not you seen the Dancing of the Rope ?  
When *Andrew's* Wit was clean run off the Score,  
And *Jacob's* Cap'ring Tricks could do no more,  
A Damsel does to the Ladders Top advance  
And with two heavy Buckets drags a Dance ;

*perk with* The Yawning Crowd pearch't up to see the sight,  
And slay'd at the Mouth for vast Delight :

*cleft* Oh Friends there's nothing to Enchant the Mind,  
Nothing like that sweet Sex to draw Mankind :  
The Foundred Horse that switching will not stir,  
Trots to the Mare, afore without a Spur.

Faith I'll go scoure the Scene-room and Engage  
*prop.* Some Toy within to save the falling Stage. *Exit.*  
*Re-Enters with Mrs. Cox.*

*nump's slave* Who have we here again, what Nymphs i'th' Stocks ?  
Your most Obedient Servant, sweet Madam Cox.  
You'd best be Coy, and Blush for a pretence,  
For Shame say something in your own Defence.

*Mrs. Cox,* What shall I say ? I have been hence so long  
I've e'ne almost forgot my Mother Tongue ;  
If I can Act I wish I were ten Fathom  
Beneath

*M. Goodman.* — Oh Lord, Pray, no swearing, Madam ;

*Mrs. Cox,* ~~Whence~~ *secret* If I had sworn, to save the Nation  
I could find out some Mental Reservation.

Well in plain Termes, Gallants, without a Sham,  
Will you be pleas'd to take me as I am.

Quite out of Countenance, with a down cast look,  
Just like a Truant that returns to Book :

Yet I'me not old, but if I were this place  
Ne're wanted Art to peice a ruin'd Face.

When Grey-Beards Govern'd I forlook the Stage,  
You know 'tis piteous work to Act with Age ;

*since* Though there's no sex amongst these Beardless Boys,  
There's what we Women love, that's Mirth & Noise,  
These young Beginners may grow up in time,  
And the Devil's in't if I'me past my Prime.

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